

Farm & Market Report

Massachusetts Department of Food and Agriculture

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December 2000

UMass Extension Update

Extension Board Lays Out New Strategies

EAST WAREHAM -- Members of the UMass Extension's Board of Public Overseers left their October 27 meeting with hefty homework assignments aimed at bolstering support for Extension among its core constituencies, and among the legislators who fund its programs.

The meeting, held at Extension's Cranberry Experiment Station, lived up to its billing by Chair Jack Angley as "a new beginning" for the board and its relations with the Extension staff, sister agencies and stakeholders. Members repeatedly pointed to a more cooperative atmosphere and a renewed commitment to constituent services. For Sharon Kennaugh, who is Associate Director of State Government Relations for the University of Massachusetts, it was an especially new beginning.

Kennaugh was recently appointed to the Board by UMass Chancellor David K. Scott, replacing Steve Demski who, as new Extension director, now serves as a non-voting Secretary to the Board.

The board appeared eager to make the most of its renewed energy by tackling the need for additional budget support from the state legislature, and the need to build stronger links with Extension's core constituencies. Extension Communications Director Joe Shoenfeld led a discussion in which each member of the Board and the Extension leadership team proposed strategies to guide the board's actions in the coming months.

In terms of external strategies, members focused on: the continuing need

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Ag. Business Training to Focus on Southeast

Rick Chandler, new director of the Department's Agricultural Business Training Program, has announced open enrollment for two ten-session agricultural entrepreneurship courses using the new nationally acclaimed NxLevel curriculum for farmers - "Tilling the Soil of Opportunity." The courses will be held January through March 2001 at UMass Dartmouth in collaboration with the Southeastern Mass. Agricultural Partnership (SEMAP). Future sessions will rotate around the state based on local interest.

All course participants should have been in business for at least two years, and should be looking to expand or change their business operations, marketing or management.

"Tilling The Soil" is designed to guide participants through the creation of a business plan. Each 3 1/2 hour session combines lecture, workshop and guest speaker formats led by a master teacher. Individual assistance is available to each participating business, both on confidential financial statements and key aspects of the future planning process. Extensive use is made of guest speakers and experts in the relevant fields.

The text and workbook are included in the registration fee of \$150 for the ten session course. Actual value for services and materials exceeds \$1500 per student, and is underwritten by MDFA.

To register for the southeast courses contact Carol Hansen, USDA/NRCS Wareham at 508-295-1481 x 118. A brochure, registration forms and information is also available from Rick Chandler at 413-577-0459, or e-mail rchandler@umext.umass.edu. Also contact Rick if you are interested in teaching, hosting or sponsoring future courses in your area. ■

Aquaculture Grants Program Seeks Proposals

The Massachusetts Aquaculture Grants Program (MAG), a competitive grants program that is open to any Massachusetts individual, company, organization or municipality, is seeking proposals. The maximum award through this Request for Response will be no more than \$40,000 per project.



The MAG was created to develop aquaculture and diversify fisheries and agricultural enterprises in Massachusetts. The program encourages environmentally responsible projects that can demonstrate public and industry benefit through work that will:

- Result in the development and implementation of new technologies, products, processes or services;
- Reduce aquaculture industry operating costs thereby increasing business profitability;
- Increase the productivity of Massachusetts aquatic cultivation endeavors;
- Generate or enhance marketing opportunities for Massachusetts aquaculture products;
- Preserve existing jobs and/or result in new employment opportunities for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In addition to addressing the general intent of this program, proposals should address one or more of the priority issues including: education, regulation clarification, seed supply, seminars for the financial industry, public relations campaigns, marketing seminars for the industry, pilot projects on the feasibility of alternative technologies and/or species.

Responses will be accepted up to 5:00 PM on Friday January 5, 2000. For more information and a copy of the complete Request for Response, contact Scott Soares 617-626-1730 or scott.soares@state.ma.us. ■



This publication is available in alternate formats upon request and on the World Wide Web at www.massgrown.org.



Commissioner's Column

Japan Offers Market for Cranberries

by Jonathan L. Healy

Given holiday themes and the plight of the industry, cranberry farms have been on our mind. Part of the problem has been rapidly increasing production, with Wisconsin and Canada putting in many new acres the past few years. Over-production, plus many other management issues, have resulted in prices that have plummeted to ten dollars per barrel, way below the costs of production. Farm Credit has forecast the possible loss of a sizeable minority of cranberry farms.

I was pleased to join Governor Cellucci, Speaker Finneran, Jeff LaFleur of the Cape Cod Cranberry Grower's Association, John Decas and Jeff Carlson of Decas Cranberry Co. and many folks representing Ocean Spray Co-op on a trade mission to Japan. These companies have made in-roads to doing business in Japan but there are still quite a few Japanese consumers that are unaware of many of the benefits of eating cranberries.

Part of the trade mission centered upon educating Japanese consumers. At a cranberry press conference in Tokyo, over 20 members of the press listened to Governor Cellucci and the cranberry community. We focussed upon the many health benefits of cranberries. The press willingly swilled large glasses of cranberry juice, and sampled a delicious cake topped with a cranberry glaze. There may have been a language barrier, but if empty glasses and plates are any indication, the press will help us get out the positive news about cranberries.

Japan offers great opportunities for cranberries. It is our second leading trading partner in the world, behind Canada, and has an educated, relatively affluent population that is very interested in healthy food choices.

It was great to see the displays of Massachusetts cranberries in many of the Tokyo supermarkets. I was astounded to see a few melons for sale for over \$150 apiece so we are all optimistic that our Massachusetts berries for sale around \$5-\$6 per package will continue to do well.

Many thanks should go to the cranberry industry as well as Governor Cellucci and Speaker Finneran, who both went the extra mile in helping us sell the Japanese cranberries through the many glasses of juice and products they willingly consumed at our promotional events!

FARM-CITY CONNECTIONS

It's Time to Support Mass. Agriculture in the Classroom !

A productive year of varied activities will be featured in the year 2000 annual report, and if you would like to be listed in the report as a supporter of this innovative program, Ag in the Classroom needs to hear from you by December 31st! Your contribution will help continue the schedule of teacher workshops in the new year as well as ag education mini-grants for teachers and groups, newsletters, curriculum pieces and resource guides.

Ag in the Classroom would also like you to be an active participant in their program. If you have an interest or inclination to visit a school in your area, or have local students visit your farm, orchard, nursery or garden center, we would like to hear from you!

Perhaps you would like to help underwrite some of the materials currently offered to teachers-or the newsletter. You and/or your business would receive full credit in print if you could sponsor an upcoming issue. Or maybe you would like to have some of our materials, such as the video tour of Massachusetts farms with ten lesson plans, to deliver personally to teachers in your town or area. Let us know how we can indirectly help promote your agricultural business and gain your support for our program.

Checks to Mass. Agriculture in the Classroom can be sent to treasurer June Johnson, 90 Pinnacle Street, Tewksbury, MA 01876. Contribute as a "Friend"- \$99 or less, Program Associate- \$100-499, or Partner in Progress- \$500 or more. Donations are tax deductible. If you would like to become involved in our program activities, call Debi Hogan at 508-336-4426, dchogan@sprynet.com or phone us here at 617-626-1735. And thanks!

Boston Public Market Project Gains New Friends

Friends of the Boston Public Market were heartened to see the wide support from various groups at the fall meeting at Maison Robert restaurant. Groups represented included the Mass. Association of Roadside Farmstands, the Federation of Mass. Farmers' Markets, the Mass. Specialty Food Association, the Boston Society of Architects, Architectural Heritage, and Oldways Preservation & Exchange Trust. Especially noted were the generous number of

great Boston chefs who know what great local foods a year round public market would bring to the area!

The chefs' contingent included Tom Daley of Henrietta's Table at the Charles Hotel, Chris Douglass of Icarus, Ed Doyle of Seaport Hotel, Charles Draghi, Gordon Hamersley of Hamersley's Bistro, Beth Gurney Piskula, Kerry Romaniello of Westport Winery, Ana Sortun of Casablanca, and Jasper White of The Summer Shack. Steve Johnson of the Blue Room spoke on behalf of the Chefs' Collaborative and gracious hostess Ann Robert of Maison Robert lent her support.

DFA will meet with the Boston Redevelopment Authority about the project this December. For a copy of the study report presented at the fall meeting or to get involved with this project, please call Janet Christensen, 617-626-1735, or David Webber, 617-626-1754, or e-mail jchristensen@state.ma.us. ■

Century Farm Books, Forms Available

Copies are available of *Massachusetts Century Farms, 2000*, a booklet featuring brief histories of some 70 Bay State farms that have been owned by the same family for 100 years or more. The farms were recognized this year by the Department.

We would like to continue adding to the registry of Century Farms. If you believe your farm qualifies, please contact us for a registration form. If your farm was recognized 10 years ago but you haven't completed this year's form, we'd like to hear from you so we can update your information.

Contact Diane Baedeker Petit at 617-626-1752, Diane.Baedeker@state.ma.us. The book and registration form are available on the web at www.massdfa.org.

Farm & Market Report Monthly

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AEEP Update

The application period for the third round of water quality improvement funding through the Agricultural Environmental Enhancement Program (AEEP) closed October 20.

Applications were received from proactive farmers whose farms are located in 18 different watersheds. Another round of funding will be available after July 1, 2001.

Farmers will be notified by the end of the year about their application. For more information on AEEP, visit www.massdfa.org or call Susan Phinney, at 617-626-1772. ■

Mass. Grown Thanksgiving for Needy

Local products filled the shelves at Massachusetts food banks, community pantries, kitchens and shelters this Thanksgiving. As a matter of policy, a portion of the food purchased for the Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP) is either Massachusetts grown or produced.

Massachusetts products purchased last month by the Greater Boston Food Bank included 170 cases of eggs from two local egg producers. Of the over 16,000 turkeys purchased through MEFAP, 1000 were locally grown with two growers receiving successful bid awards. And the Pioneer Valley Growers Association supplied 3,549 cases of apples, potatoes, onions, squash and carrots.

The folks who run the pantries and shelters, said this was some of the finest quality products they have ever handled. For more information about MEFAP contact Craig Richov at 508-792-7711 x14. ■

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to reach out to small stakeholders, industry groups, and professional organizations; the need to make Extension more visible to key legislators, state and federal administration officials, and their staffs; the need to boost efforts to educate those constituencies about the state of agriculture in Massachusetts; and to boost regional collaborations.

Internal strategies focused on creating new opportunities to improve communication with legislators and stakeholder groups, and hiring a professional lobbyist to represent the Board on Beacon Hill. Each board member and program coordinator assumed a task to be completed before the January 25, 2001 meeting, which will be held at Board member Ed Davidian's farm stand in Northboro.

The board also heard from the staff of the Southeast Massachusetts Agricultural Partnership on a proposal to establish an agricultural extension Access Point at the UMass Dartmouth, to be staffed by seven new full-time Extension employees, along with one additional Extension employee for Barnstable County. The group has scheduled a November 17 meeting on the proposal. ■

Christmas Tree Growers See Strong Sales

A good economy mixed with a dollop of nostalgia are the recipe for strong sales at Massachusetts Christmas tree farms this year. Local growers say that business has been increasing steadily over the past few years as more families realize that visiting a nearby tree farm means more than just buying a tree.

"Visiting a tree farm is very appealing to families," says Ron Weston, owner of Hollow Brook Farm, a choose and cut operation in Brimfield, Mass. "The whole family participates. I've even seen families coming in from the fields singing." A visit to Weston's farm includes hot chocolate and coffee and candy canes for the kids.

Weston, who has been selling trees on his 135 acre farm for 15 years, says that his tree sales have been increasing by 100 trees a year for the past several years with not much more than word of mouth advertising.

David Morin, owner of Arrowhead Acres Farm in Uxbridge, says that his sales are running about 30 percent ahead of last year. "We offer a lot of extras such as hayrides, free netting, and tree shaking that you won't find on a tree lot," says Morin.

Prices have been holding steady over the past several years at Bay State Christmas tree farms, according to the Mass. Christmas Tree Association (MCTA). Prices generally range from \$20 to \$40 depending on size, species and location of the farm. Many farms charge a uniform price for all their trees.

Christmas tree production is important to the state's economy and environment, says state Commissioner of Food and Agriculture Jonathan L. Healy.

"Today nearly all Christmas trees are produced as a farm crop which provides employment, the preservation of open space and homes for wildlife," explains Healy. "Some 5000 acres are devoted to Christmas Tree production in Massachusetts and the crop is valued at \$2.3 million annually."

Freshness and selection are the biggest advantages of buying local, say growers. "Nothing is fresher than a tree you watch being cut," says Morin. ■

CLASSIFIEDS

Apple of Your Pie book by Eileen Maher Kronauer of Harvard, MA. History of antique apples, apple pie recipes, easy to follow crust directions, apples best for baking. Retail: \$15.99, substantial discount for farmstands. 978-456-6965

Old Mountain Farm; Nigerian Dwarf Goats. Taking resv for bottlefed kids. Reg, show qual, Blue eyes, HES, healthy, Cape Neddick/ York, ME olmfarm@gwi.net, 207-361-2126

Beehive woodenware, new kd supers (deep, medium, shallow) & inner/outer covers, bottom boards, frames, and foundation. Would like to clear out the storage area. 413-786-1533.

Grimm Model B tedder with lots of spare parts \$250, Blandford 413-848-2773 or tonyvaw@aol.com

FARMERS: Need help with your property? We'll run a free help-wanted ad for you in the *Caretaker Gazette*. 480-488-1970, caretaker@uswest.net.

Wanted: Pneumatic pruning sys in gd wrkng order, Troy NH 603-242-6417 blueberry@monad.net

Certified Mass. Drinking Water Operator Svcs, 15+ years in water profession. B.S./M.B.A. Linda Correia, 508-674-2832, Virgo011@aol.com

For Sale: 20 Dorset & Dorset X ewes 4-6 yrs \$50 ea. 1 Dorset ram prvn breeder \$100. 11 fall ewe lambs \$75 ea. 12 Nubian & Nubian Alpine does 4-5 yrs. 1 8-mo Nubian x doe \$100. All electric fence trained. Flock 6 mos from scrapies free cert. 413-296-4064.

For sale: 1 International Mod 150 shovel/dozer - 4 in 1 bucket powershift. Excellent running condition, good bottom. \$6,000 or B/O. 508-428-5890.

Hay for sale: 5,000 lbs good qual 1st cut @ \$1.50 & \$2.50, 2,000 bts 2nd cut @ \$2.25. Round bts avail. Mike Quinn, Middlebury VT, 802-388-7828.

For sale: 2 year old registered purebred Merino ram, \$500. 413-527-6385.

Farm mngr needed by spring. F/T Y/R pos at small NOFA cert farm. Hsng avail. Must be exp org grw able to interact w/public. Fran or Jean White, Holly Hill Farm, Cohasset, MA. 781-383-6965.

Corn silage & 1st cutting hay for sale. Wanted 2 row 2 pt. hitch cultivator. 413-772-0790.

Help wanted: Land's Sake, Inc., Weston, MA. 30 acre produce farm seeks an Assistant Grower and a Forestry Manager. 781-893-1162.

For sale: cold frames, great for early planting, sprayer, Farmall planter, cast iron sinks, 3 panel windows. B/O. Bridgewater MA. 508-697-2752.

Massey Ferguson feed grinder mixer, \$1000. 978-874-2822.

Sweet corn growers: model 90 plastic mulch layer by Mechanical Transplanter Co. Prchsd yr. 2000, used 1 season. \$1000. Pittsfield. 413-442-1076.

Seeking Assitant Farm Manager and interns. Could evolve into Y/R mgt pos. or partnership. Org. veg, fruits, flowers, g.h. crops w/ emphasis on retail and CSA mktg. Ryan, 413-367-2395.

DEADLINE for the next issue of the *Farm & Market Report* will be December 18.

How to Place a Classified Ad

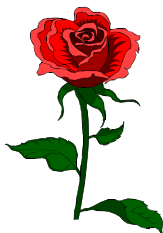
Classified ads are accepted free-of-charge on a first-come basis only. Limit: 25 words. Be sure to include a phone number. No display ads will be accepted. Only one listing per issue unless space permits. Ads may run in consecutive issues, space permitting, providing we are notified before the deadline for each issue.

Ads must be of interest to Massachusetts farmers. The Mass. Dept. of Food and Agriculture reserves the right to refuse any listing it deems inappropriate for publication.

Send typewritten or neatly printed copy to: Farm & Market Report, Mass. Dept. of Food and Agriculture, 251 Causeway St., Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114, fax: 617-626-1850, dbaedeker@state.ma.us or call 617-626-1752.

Winter Flower Growers Meeting Slated

Beat the winter blues by joining UMass Extension and the Mass. Flower Growers Association in the greenhouse at King Farm, Inc. in Townsend, Mass., on January 30, 2001 for the annual Winter Flower Growers Meeting.



All commercial flower growers are welcome. There will be open houses at Gilson Farms (Herb grower) and Cupp & Sons (cut flowers) from 7:30 am to 10:00 am. An educational program will follow at King Farm, Inc. beginning at 10:00 AM and ending at 3:30 PM.

Featured topics will include potted herb production, managing root diseases on greenhouse crops and a tour of King Farm's new greenhouse addition. A catered lunch will be available. For a program flier and pre-registration form, contact Tina Smith 413-545-5306 or Paul Lopes 508-295-2212, UMass Extension, or Bob Luczai 978-952-0116, Massachusetts Flower Growers Association. ■

UMass Garden Calendar Available

The 2001 Garden Calendar published by UMass Extension is now available. The calendar, featuring photos, gardening tips and more, is available for \$8 each. Call 413-545-2717 for ordering information.

Calendar

- ◆ Dec. 11 & 18 **Exploring Your Business Dream**, 6:30 - 9:30 pm at the New Hingham School Library, Smith Rd., Chesterfield. Sponsored by the Hiltown CDC. Fee: \$60; some scholarships available. This series is a pre-requisite for the Spring 2001 NxLevel business class. Pre-registration is required. Call Marge Pringle, 413-296-4536.
- ◆ Dec. 14 **Federation of Massachusetts Farmers' Markets Annual Meeting**, 3:30 - 5:00 (Board of Director's Meeting, 2:30-3:30). Potluck dinner begins at 5:00. At Hyland Orchard and Brewery, Sturbridge MA. Call Amy Todd or Jeff Cole at 781-893-8222 for information and/or to RSVP.
- ◆ Jan. 15-22 **16th Annual North American Farmers Direct Marketing Association Conference and Trade Show** -- Diversity in the Desert -- at the Sheraton Mesa Hotel, Mesa, AZ. Includes workshops on a variety of marketing topics, tours of direct marketing operations and a 100 exhibitor trade show. For more information, call 888-884-9270, e-mail nafdma@map.com, or visit www.familyfarms.com.
- ◆ Jan. 26-28 **Boston Cooks!** at the World Trade Center, Boston. A three-day expo featuring over 100 exhibitors showcasing recent trends and innovations in the kitchen and culinary industries. Local and national celebrity chefs, culinary round tables, cookbook signings, seminars and sampling are featured. Tickets go on sale Jan. 9th at Stop & Shop supermarkets for \$10 and through Ticketmaster for \$12 at various locations or by calling 617-931-2000. Tickets may be purchased at the door for \$12. Children 12 and under free.
- ◆ Feb. 3 **14th Annual NOFA/Mass. Winter Conference**, at the Quabbin Regional High School, 800 South St., Barre. Sponsored by the Northeast Organic Farming Association/Mass. Chapter. For more information, call Elaine Peterson, 508-928-4707.

Mass. Ag. Calendar Makes a Great Holiday Gift

The 2001 Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar, featuring the winning photos of this year's Massachusetts Agriculture Calendar Photo Contest, makes a great holiday gift. In addition to the winning photos, the calendar features fun facts about Massachusetts agriculture, dates when local crops are in season, and information on printed and web-based directories of local farms and products.

Proceeds benefit Massachusetts Ag in the Classroom. Calendars may be purchased for \$5 each, or \$3 each for 10

or more. If you'd like to order this attractive full color calendar, send a check payable to Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom, to Calendar, Mass. Dept. of Food and Agriculture, 251 Causeway St., Suite 500, Boston, MA 02114

Other holiday gifts available include "Mass. grown...and fresher!" logo hats, t-shirts and tote bags: Calendar photos and photos of other merchandise, are on-line at www.massgrown.org. ■

12/00

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